

Editorial

A man for trough times ahead

The admiring crowd gasped with unisonic awe as the giant helicopter's landing-gear touched the tarmac of Interstate Route 93, just outside Concord, New Hampshire. As the gold-plated rotor stuttered to a halt, the great doors on the side of the purple fuselage's belly were slid down by liveried attendants wearing white uniforms with gold epaulets. An hydraulic mechanism thrust the gangway out from the fuselage; as the lowest step touched the tarmac, a great roll of red carpet unfurled itself, down the stairway, and out from the craft toward the waiting crowd.

Instantly, four bare-chested attendants, each of not less than 250 pounds, adorned with turban, pantaloons, and broad sash, great scimitars at their side, issued from the door of the helicopter, to stand on parade beside the far end of the red carpet.

The adoring throng held its breath until most were blue in the face, lest the sound of their breathing obscure a single prophetic rustling of the great one's approach. A roar of breathless adulation rocketed from the throng as he himself appeared in the doorway of the craft, the Dick von Trog so fabulously wealthy it was rumored that each morning each of the tips of his hairs was individually manicured. It was said that even Rockefeller gasped with awe at the mere thought of von Trog.

The great one swiveled his head slowly, scanning the nearly prostrate crowd with a diffident hint of a smile. He had arrived to receive the pledge of fealty from the citizens of this humble state capital; only those political extremists with dirty minds whispered he had come to steal the gold leaf from the dome of the capitol building.

The great one levered himself down the gangway, and then moved imperiously along the unfurled carpet, while the scimitared attendants, bare chests bluing in the chill winds of an overcast October day, herded the crowd into the looping single file of a reception-line. The great one's secretary scuttled officiously from behind von Trog to assume the spot at which to orchestrate

the reception ceremonies.

The handshaking done, those who had fainted discreetly carried away in waiting ambulances, the great one began his oratorical utterance: "The time has come to stand up and resist the looting of our economy by those foreigners we call our allies." If the crowd had ever doubted this a moment before, now it was revealed to one and all, that this great one was the true presidential material for which all had waited, so devoutly, so despairingly, for so long.

Here was a man who had lifted himself from humble beginnings as a lowly slumlord, to become the acknowledged satrap of a formerly great city, a modern Nero whose mere look could launch holocausts of fire among vast tracts of tenements, and lift whole complexes of high-rise boxes, phoenix-like, from amid the smouldering ashes, a man whose awesome indebtedness exceeded that of many national governments, a man who stood at the peak of an Everest of financial leverage, a man who had risen to such heights from the depths of being von Trog, a man who dared to walk the giddy pathway betwixt vast wealth and abysmal ruin. Who could deny, that this man, more than nearly all others, was the living incarnation of that great balloon which the outgoing President praised as the adored symbol of our national prosperity.

This was the man of the new prosperity. Away with the old! Prosperity is not to be held, but adored; its aromas are to be savored, but not to be tasted, not to be worn, but admired on stage; its splendor is greatest, when it is less diluted by sharing, that assembled, rallied to become an apotheosis of itself in the eye of the envious adorer, gathered into one great mass, in the titled possession of a von Trog.

With a von Trog as President, poor as the nation might become, it would seem all the richer, because all the wealth of the nation which might remain would stand before the world proudly in one great, awesome mass, gathered unto the person of von Trog. Vox populi, vox von Trog; Hail, Caesar, von Trog!